News from the Savannah River National Laboratory

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Medical College of Georgia and Savannah River National Laboratory Sign Agreement to Combine Strengths, Multiply Results

AUGUSTA, Ga. (Aug. 18, 2004) – Today the CSRA's two premiere research institutions – the Medical College of Georgia and the Savannah River National Laboratory – signed a collaborative agreement that will allow them to combine their strengths and achieve results that would be out of the reach of either institution on its own.

The agreement is intended to stimulate collaboration among the researchers at the two institutions on tasks that can assist both MCG and the Department of Energy (which owns SRNL) in carrying out their missions. Recent technical exchanges among the researchers have shown that MCG and SRNL have common needs and interests in technologies that entail both life sciences and engineering aspects. This agreement provides the framework for pursuing those interests.

"Collaboration among researchers with different strengths and different areas of expertise brings a broader perspective, and the ability to identify possibilities that weren't apparent before," said SRNL Director Dr. Todd Wright. "For over 50 years, SRNL researchers have been creating the technologies needed for nuclear processes, waste management and environmental cleanup. Teaming with the scientists from MCG allows them to build on the same body of knowledge, combine it with MCG's unique strengths, and come up with entirely new developments."

"Certainly it is desirable and logical that we reach across the Savannah River to this large group of distinguished scientists to combine our strengths in the pursuit of knowledge about the body, disease and better ways to treat and cure human suffering," said Dr. Matthew J. Kluger, MCG vice president for research. "This enhanced alignment with SRNL is in keeping with MCG's dramatic growth in research activity over the past five years, which includes record levels of research funding and collaboration with our colleagues across the state and nation."

Under this agreement, researchers from MCG and SRNL will collaborate on joint proposals for research and development. The complementary strengths of the two institutions will enhance the quality of the proposed work, making it much more attractive to funding organizations such as the National Institutes of Health.

The signing of this agreement is not the first contact between the two organizations' researchers. Together, they have already defined a list of over 30 potential joint collaborations that might be pursued. Of high interest are dual-use technologies, which are technologies developed for one purpose, then adapted for another. Among the types of projects they envision:

Expansion of ongoing collaborations in dental materials science, such as studies of the radiation effects on dental materials, and medication-releasing denture liners

Biotechnology research in areas from biodefense to biological waste treatment and bioremediation

Integrative research concerning environmental contaminants including the origins and environmental transformations of contaminants, human exposure pathways, and health effects

Technologies developed for homeland defense applications, such as remote monitoring capabilities, being considered for applications in emergency medicine, including remote monitoring of non-accessible injured personnel and remote triage

New materials that were originally developed for waste management uses, being evaluated for sequestering metals in the body for therapeutic uses

Electrochemical studies used in waste management activities being studied for applicability to heart stent materials

3-D imaging and rapid fabrication technologies, which allow on-location fabrication of parts, being examined for construction of materials for implants or for treatment of injuries

Sensors developed for environmental monitoring and environmental cleanup studies being considered for special periodontal probes, and sensors coupled with computer assisted design being studied for producing dental appliances, as well as use in reconstructive surgery

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